

A Pax y Justicia member who came with Leonardo Perez Esquivel Aug. 11

Pascade

(I didn't catch his name—thought you might have it on your list of appointments) came to explain about his new Movimiento Ecumenico por los Derechos Humanos. He said it was organized about a year ago but has just now opened new offices (Cerrito 466—Piso 7 Departamento 76 Capital Federal 1010—Telephone 35-3472). He is seeking intl accreditation (?) for the movement.

Visitor said that the founders—mainly pacifists from the Pax y Justicia organizations it appears—see the movement as a permanent organization to seek peaceful solutions to problems. For the moment, however, it is interested in specific human rights cases, and has collected testimony on 901 names. (Many are of persons we follow, as well.) I commented that there seem to be a lot of independent organizations all collecting the same incomplete info and said it would be helpful if they could pool their resources and energies to coordinate information as is done through the Catholic Church's Solidarity Vicarate in Chile. He said that was precisely the intention of this group. They are first seeking support from the Church and other religious groups—donations, publicity of their activities here in Argentina, information submitted on behalf of hr cases, and, most importantly, some sort of official church ~~xxx~~ backing to provide them with some security as an organization. With this the movement hopes to provide an open and central office where people can register human rights complaints, get legal and spiritual assistance, seek advice from others' experiences, and where families of detainees and disappeared persons can seek financial aid. The movement already has an office ~~and~~ and a lawyer, it is working now to put ~~xxxxxx~~ together a staff and hopefully volunteer lawyers, social workers, clerical staff, etc. ^{in answer to my specific questions he said} ~~xxxxxx~~ they will be checking off names against the PIN lists, try to follow up on cases, and would be soon getting in touch with the Permanent Assembly and other groups (I gave him ~~xx~~ some names of groups who have come in to see us and Derian, as well) to try to coordinate information, although he says his movement will not "take over" the functions of any of the other groups. (Whatever that means.) I told him it sounded like a useful and worthy plan and we would be interested to know ~~xxx~~ how he progresses in establishing a centralized office for all human rights cases, ~~how~~ and how the various other groups will share in the effort. I asked if the movement had any specific idea on how to press for resolution of cases and he said they will present cases and petitions through the Church to the govt. In answer to my remark that the Church hasn't exactly taken the lead in this sort of thing, he agreed but said we still don't know what was decided at the latest bishops meeting. He also said his movement wants to make contact with church groups in the US and elsewhere.

The whole thing is obviously very new, but I didn't get a strong feeling that this would be the place where human rights cases would

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find a forceful and centralized representation. The visitor's comments were mainly philosophical although he answered all my specific questions with the affirmation that this group would like to assume a strong coordinator role on the lines of the Vicarate in Chile. I asked him if we should refer our own ^{complaints} ~~complaints~~ to him and he quickly agreed. Though it actually may develop into something, it is hard to distinguish the general thrust from any of the many other groups which have sprouted up to register human rights cases. Anyway, I'm sure you'll want to follow it. He said he would keep in touch. Do you have his name on your appointments list? PS/ I also found his apparent dependence on the Church to be a weakness. The Church here is nothing like the Chilean or Brazilian Church and we have considerable reason to expect it will continue to avoid jeopardizing its own wary relationship with GOA ~~by exercising~~ and to avoid serving as an official or semi-official conduit of human rights requests to govt authorities.

Yvonne